

The Lessons

The following overview of each lesson illustrates how the curriculum weaves the purposes, content, organizers, learning activities, and teaching strategies together to form an educational program.

Lesson 1 Reconnects student to the purposes of DARE. Introduces the officer, and develops some initial communication skills while “getting to know” each other better. A game is played that helps students see if they understand what the effects and consequences of using various drugs are.

Lesson 2: Continues the game to review and correct misinformation about selected drugs, their effects, and potential consequences from using them. A brief presentation on the key functions of the brain and how some drugs affect those functions follows. The lesson then engages students as members of an EMS squad who has a “patient” down in the school bathroom. The team is given a card with the patient’s symptoms and a chart with an array of drugs and their typical effects on users. The team “calls in” to the hospital with their diagnosis and reasons for their conclusions. The lesson then turns to asking the students to find out where in their community their patient could receive further assistance with their drug related problems.

Lesson 3: Engages students in the analysis of tobacco and alcohol related ads and the development of PSAs that counter the ads. The objective is to enable students to comprehend why tobacco and alcoholic beverage companies target young people and how that works against the students Taking Charge of Their Lives.

Lesson 4: Focuses on normative beliefs by asking students to guess how many 8th graders smoke on a regular basis, drink an alcoholic beverage once a month, smoke/use marijuana monthly, and huff inhalants. They then compare their guesses with national study findings and develop a 30-second TV report of the findings and the bottom line: the majority of 8th graders DO NOT use these drugs and that the belief that everybody is using is simply not true.

Lesson 5: The content focus shifts from effects of the four drugs, media pressures, and normative beliefs about the use of these four drugs to resistance skills. Realistic scenarios are used to introduce and develop decision-making skills and refusal strategies.

Lesson 6: Extends the use of the decision-making model in a sequence of scenarios. Acting confidently or assertively is an additional skill that becomes part of the cluster of resistance skills.

Lesson 7: Practice the resistance skills through “solving problems” embedded in scenarios of a variety of typical problems faced by adolescents. The officer and other students give guided feedback to each student’s role-play of responses to these problems to assure the use of accurate information and appropriate application of the communication skills.

Lessons 8: This lesson addresses feelings of frustration and anger and ways to “cool it” and prevent violent behavior. The communication and assertiveness skills developed earlier are applied as scenarios of situations that can produce frustration and anger are examined and responses played out.

Lessons 9 and 10: Take students into a simulated courtroom in which “cases” where social and/or legal responsibilities have been violated are argued by teams of defendants and prosecutors before “judges”. The purpose is to enable students to understand that in addition to health-related effects and consequences of drug use, there are also social and legal consequences. The lesson and program closes on a positive activity in which the students generate all of the fun things they can do in their community without using any of the drugs studied in this program.

Summary

The lessons and training that follow this design statement set out in greater detail:

- 1). What we believe students should internalize and act on in order to take charge of their lives in relation to drug use,
- 2). How students can best learn these concepts, perspectives, and skills, and
- 3). What instructors are to do to support students learning these key ideas and skills.